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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Kickstarter Campaign Entering Final Week for *Follow the Leader*,
New Film Chronicling Three Young Leaders Aspiring to Become U.S. President**

Cameos include late Senator Ted Kennedy, Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, Senator John McCain, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former President Bill Clinton

Preview screenings held during campaign for ideologically-opposed groups,
Roosevelt Institute and Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform

New York, New York July 18, 2012 – A Kickstarter campaign is entering its final week to complete post-production and launch distribution of filmmaker Jonathan Goodman Levitt's *FOLLOW THE LEADER*, a real-life coming-of-age story of three traditional American boys with Presidential dreams. A journey of political and personal discovery, the film promises to spark meaningful and reflective conversations about American political realities in the months surrounding the 2012 U.S. Presidential election.

In *FOLLOW THE LEADER*, sixteen-years-old, high school class presidents Ben (The Loyalist from Virginia), D.J. (The Believer from Massachusetts) and Nick (The Idealist from Pennsylvania) are all conservatives who plan to continue leading their peers as President someday. Over three life-changing years, they split into Republican, Democratic and Independent camps as each reconsiders his lofty ambitions. Growing up at a critical moment for America as well, their lives also force us all to rethink our assumptions about tomorrow's leaders, the impact of 9/11 on them, and the political views of the millennial generation – which are more complicated than most people currently believe. As shocking as "Jesus Camp," as revealing as "American Teen," and as funny as "Spellbound" – *FOLLOW THE LEADER* is the true story of what change means for three young leaders who feel destined to lead the world.

"After living abroad during 9/11 and for nearly a decade, *FOLLOW THE LEADER* began as a personal investigation into the politics of today's youth, whose contradictory views confused me while teaching in the U.S. post-9/11," said Levitt. "By sympathetically portraying its characters on their own terms, the film provokes us to reexamine both our preconceptions about youth and conservatives, as well as our own political views. But more than that, our aim is to force people to reflect on the entrenched inequalities within the American political system in a different way. The traditional methods of sparking such discussions aren't working – often because such efforts themselves are politically motivated, and because they don't even bring people of all political stripes to the table."

Earlier in the campaign, Levitt was warmly received at high-profile gatherings of both progressive and conservative activists, a rare feat for any documentary, especially one on such political subject matter. At a sneak preview at the Roosevelt Institute's Summer Academy (a non-profit carrying forward the legacy of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, <http://www.rooseveltinstitute.org/about>), over 75 progressive student leaders discussed the future of political leadership and reconsidered how many of them unfairly demonize those on the "right." The following week at Grover Norquist's famed "Wednesday Meeting" for conservative activists at the Americans for Tax Reform (<http://www.atr.org/>), Levitt's presentation with the trailer was met with laughter and the formation of several budding partnerships; the film was shown immediately after the Wednesday Meeting in the same space, and led to spirited discussion about how tomorrow's generation are redefining what "liberalism" and "conservatism" mean for the future.

A large focus of the film's outreach starting this fall involves the linked transmedia project REALITY CHECK INTERACTIVE, a unique cross-platform social change initiative that combines interactive voting technology and an episodic presentation of *FOLLOW THE LEADER* to spark a national conversation about American political realities. REALITY CHECK's lead facilitator is collective intelligence expert Chris Bui, who has led over 2,000 government and civic meetings since starting out running independently organized consensus-building meetings during the 1992 Ross Perot campaign. Levitt is saying "yes we can talk to all sides, and indeed each of us must engage with people who disagree with us in a fair-minded way for the good of our country." As bitter political feuds seem to erupt everywhere in public, Levitt and his team – including activists across the political spectrum, and key figures in the transmedia and

transpartisan spaces – are planning a unique national tour surrounding the 2012 Elections. College and community groups are being mandated by the outreach team to expressly co-sponsor screenings with ideologically different groups so that bridge building and discussions organized around such a non-judgmental film can be an antidote to what is already becoming a fiercely negative election season.

Through Kickstarter, Levitt is seeking help in funding the completion of post-production, insurance and some outstanding music clearances required to release the film, as well as the initial launch of REALITY CHECK INTERACTIVE. If *FOLLOW THE LEADER* successfully reaches its goal pledges totaling \$27,000 by July 26, backers will receive a multitude of perks. Pledge tiers start as little as \$5 (Town Crier) and go up to \$10,000 (Presidential Level). At this top level, backers receive an official credit, special recognition on the Partner Page of Official Website, and a NYC screening in your honor (with airfare from elsewhere in the US for you and a guest!)

Today and Thursday, private supporter screenings in New York, London and California are being announced. RH Gallery in Lower Manhattan (<http://www.rhgallery.com/>) will host a screening and discussion on August 15; London's exclusive Eight Club (<http://www.eightclub.co.uk/>) plans a VIP-treatment event for September; and Tom and Joy Campanaro, founders of The Total Gym (<http://www.totalgym.com/>) and new backers of the project, are hosting a private screening in their San Diego-area home on October 9. Access to supporter screenings is ONLY via becoming a backer on Kickstarter. Another featured reward is a copy of the new Bloomsbury release (just published July 15), "Give Me the Money and I'll Shoot" – a documentary professional trade book, which features an extended interview with Levitt and case study of *FOLLOW THE LEADER*; and author and funding expert Nicola Lees will also provide a 30-minute Skype consultation to anyone who backs the project at the \$125 level.

Among the many prominent politicians making cameos in *FOLLOW THE LEADER* are the late **Ted Kennedy** (his last film); U.S. Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton**; former President **Bill Clinton**; U.S. Senator from Arizona **John McCain**, who ran against Barack Obama for President in 2008; **Ken Cuccinelli**, the Attorney General of Virginia, and a candidate for Governor of Virginia in 2013 who was just named one of Politico's rising stars on the verge of national prominence; **Deval Patrick**, current Governor of Massachusetts, and the second African-American elected Governor of any U.S. state; **Michael Dukakis**, the longest-serving Governor in Massachusetts history, who in 1988 was the Democratic Nominee for President; **Niki Tsongas**, the first woman elected to Congress from Massachusetts in 25 years who now represents the state's 5th Congressional District in the U.S. House; and **Michael Bloomberg**, the billionaire founder of Bloomberg L.P., and current Mayor of New York City.

To make a pledge to *FOLLOW THE LEADER* and REALITY CHECK INTERACTIVE on Kickstarter, visit:
<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/followtheleader/follow-the-leader-and-reality-check-interactive>

For more information on *FOLLOW THE LEADER*, visit:
<http://www.followtheleaderfilm.com/> (Official Movie Site)
<https://www.facebook.com/followtheleaderfilm> (Facebook)
<https://twitter.com/changeworxfilms> (Twitter)

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER:

FOLLOW THE LEADER is Jonathan Goodman Levitt's first film made back home in the United States, after a decade working as a filmmaker based in London. His past work as director and/or producer has been primarily funded and shown by European broadcasters including BBC, Channel 4, DR, NRK and SVT. Jonathan's company Changeworx USA LLC is also currently in production on films with international partners in Pakistan and Chile that have received support from funders including Arte, TriBeCa Film Institute, Center for Asian American Media, Ford Foundation, IFP and Women Make Movies. His previous feature *SUNNY INTERVALS AND SHOWERS* (Director / Producer / Editor / Camera, 2006) screened at Film Festivals worldwide including Sheffield, Chicago and One World; aired as part of the BBC Storyville documentary strand; and was nominated for Grierson (British Documentary) and Mental Health Media Awards. Other credits include consulting on a Best Documentary Emmy-winner featuring Stephen Fry, and various roles on several successful short films and multi-screen art installations. Jonathan studied social psychology, political philosophy, and studio art at Stanford, and was a Fulbright Scholar studying at the UK's National Film School (NFTS) in 1999. Since 2008, he has been based in Brooklyn, New York.

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For interview requests with filmmaker Jonathan Goodman Levitt, please contact Brian Geldin (BGPR) at: 917-549-2953 or briangeldin@gmail.com. Visit BGPR at <http://briangeldin.com/>. High-Resolution Production Images available upon request.